

Environmental Tips for

Tenants and Homeowners



Water Quality

TITLE V/SEPTIC SYSTEMS is a State Environmental Code designed to protect the public from contaminated drinking water from failing septic systems. Septic systems must be inspected prior to property transfer. A proposed expansion of a home, or increase in bedrooms or rooms that could be used as bedrooms, needs to be reviewed by local Boards of Health prior to issuing a building permit.

PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES are regulated by each community. The water supply should be tested and distribution system inspected prior to property transfer. The Board of Health can inform you about what to test for and provide guidelines for siting and constructing a new water supply.

Potential Hazards

LEAD, contained in paint, plaster or other materials, can be found on walls, window and door trims, railings, baseboards and radiators. Sellers or brokers are legally required to inform buyers about Lead Paint Law requirements and potential health risks, especially to children. Lead-contaminated drinking water (often leached from lead tanks or pipes) can contribute to exposure.

ASBESTOS is a group of naturally occurring minerals that separate into strong, fine fibers. Asbestos is only dangerous when it has deteriorated to the point where its microscopic fibers are released into the air and inhaled. If inhaled or ingested, the fibers can remain in the body for many years and cause disease. Asbestos is often found in insulation or building materials including pipe insulation, furnace and boiler coverings, exterior shingles, asbestos paper and automotive brake linings.

UFFI, a type of home insulation, reacts with heat and humidity and releases formaldehyde. It was banned by Massachusetts in 1979 because it can cause respiratory and other health problems. Landlords and sellers must determine if UFFI is present and, if so, test and disclose the results to any consecutive owner or tenant entering into a purchase or rental agreement.

RADON, a naturally occurring gas, is odorless, colorless and tasteless. Long term exposure to high levels of radon can cause lung cancer. Homes can easily be tested to determine whether high levels of radon are present. If so, the problem can be corrected by a trained contractor. *To purchase a test kit call the MA Dept. of Public Health or CET.*

FORMALDEHYDE is a chemical used to make other chemicals, building materials and household products (plywood, particle board, fiberboard, paints, coatings, cosmetics, for example). Formaldehyde can "off-gas" from materials made with it. Sources such as wood products, fabrics or draperies release more formaldehyde gas when new. As they age, the release decreases. Exposure to formaldehyde gas can cause health problems in sensitive individuals including infants, elderly, people with asthma, allergies and other respiratory diseases.

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) is a toxic gas that is odorless, colorless and tasteless. High levels in the home can be produced by malfunctioning heating systems, inadequate heating ventilation, use of cooking appliances for heating, indoor use of barbecue grills or repairing engines without proper ventilation. Check your heating system, chimney and combustion appliances periodically to ensure they are in good working order. If you suspect the presence of CO, call your fuel supplier. For emergencies, call the fire department. *Purchase CO monitors at hardware or discount department stores, or call CET.*

Helpful numbers...

CET: (413/445-4556 or 800/238-1221)

Lead: MA State Lead Program, MA Dept. of Public Health (413/586-7527 or 800/532-9571)

Asbestos, UFFI: MA Dept. of Public Health: (617/983-6762 or 617/292-5631)

Radon: Radiation Control Program (413/586-7525)

Title V/Septic Systems: (Local Board of Health or DEP Title V Hotline (617/292-5886 or 800/266-1122)

Formaldehyde: www.epa.gov/iaq/formalde.html

Disclaimer: This flyer is intended to provide introductory information about several topics that often arise when buying, selling or renting a home. It is not intended to be a comprehensive, complete or exhaustive source of information related to these or other topics. CET is not responsible for errors or omissions.

For More Information Call 1 (800) 238-1221
Center for Ecological Technology (CET) www.cetonline.org
112 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201 (413) 445-4556
26 Market St., Northampton, MA 01060 (413) 586-7350

Recycling and Composting

Each community has its own way of handling recycling (see below for contact information). As a general rule, recyclable containers should be rinsed and lids or caps removed, and paper should be dry. For specific information, **call 1-800-CLEAN-UP www.cleanup.org, your Town Hall, Board of Health, Dept. of Public Works, CET or...**

Franklin County Solid Waste Management District: 413/772-2438

Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative: 413/268-3845

Northern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District: 413/743-8208

Southern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District, C/O CET: 413/445-4556, 800/238-1221

Tri-Town Health Department: (Lee, Lenox, Stockbridge.) 413/243-5540



COMPOST YOUR ORGANIC WASTE!

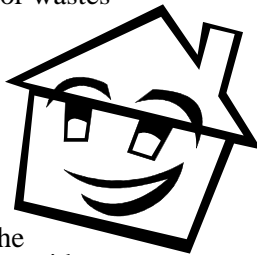
Composting is the decomposition of leaves, garden waste and vegetable scraps into a soil-like substance. When finished, compost is a brown, crumbly, earthy-smelling material that is referred to as "black gold" by many gardeners. Home composting is a great way to take care of a significant part of your waste. *For more information, call CET.*

Household Hazardous Products

Household hazardous waste is unwanted or unusable products that have hazardous ingredients. They are potentially dangerous to humans and the environment when not used, stored, or disposed of properly. Examples include automotive fluids, paint (not latex based), cleaning supplies, pesticides and pool chemicals. Labels such as danger, poison, warning or caution identify the degree of immediate hazard posed by the product.

WHEN MOVING IN OR OUT...

- ☒ Make an inventory of hazardous products or wastes your mover cannot transport.
- ☒ Use up what you can or offer products to others.
- ☒ Dried out latex paint can be disposed of with regular trash.
- ☒ Call your Town Hall or Department of Public Works to find out what to do with the remaining wastes, or items left by previous residents.



WHEN PURCHASING NEW PRODUCTS...

Choose your home improvement and cleaning products carefully. Check the "signal word" on the label for potential hazards. Vinegar and baking soda make great safe alternatives. Call CET for a free recipe pamphlet.

Batteries

Type	Common Uses	Options
Button	Hearing aids, watches, cameras, calculator, pagers	Do not trash! Return to point of purchase (save receipt).
Alkaline	9-volt, D, C, AA, AAA	Dispose of in your trash or save for future recycling.
Rechargeable	Appliances, power tools, camcorders, radios, cellular phones	Save for hazardous waste collection or call 800/8-BATTERY for collection locations.

More Helpful Hints...

REDUCE UNWANTED "JUNK" MAIL!

If you don't enjoy receiving most types of national direct mail, send a postcard (available from CET) with your name and address to: Direct Marketing Association's Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735.

AT THE GROCERY STORE...

- ☺ Buy large economy size packages and bulk food when available. Reuse your shopping bag, whether it's cloth, paper or plastic.
- ☺ Buy Recycled! When you shop, ask for products and packaging made from recycled materials. Purchasing recycled products strengthens markets for local recycling programs. Remember... you are not really recycling until you buy products made with recycled content!

IN THE KITCHEN...

- ☺ Set up an efficient, easy-to-use recycling center and bulk food storage space.
- ☺ Reuse plastic containers for food storage, aluminum foil (when possible) and plastic bags. Use cloth dishrags instead of paper towels.

More Helpful Phone Numbers...

Mass Poison Information Ctr. (617/232-2120)

Hazardous Waste Management: Mass Dept. of Environmental Protection (617/292-5853)

Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection, Western Region: (413/784-1100)

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